(1) "Like Gordi's speeches, become Beginning and near together."
"Epilogue -- God's Love was this" story

When asked by an Englishwoman what history we studied in the United States,, a friend of mine answered in the same spirit as the question:
" We study the wars of George the Third"..
This had very little effect,, said my friend,, except to make a Scotchman who was present,, swallow his tea backwards.

My friend might have made a better answer. He might have told the following story.
It happened in 1825 at the frontier village of Fredonia near Lake erie,, New York State,, was furiously playing host to the venerable Marquis de. Lafayette,, towing him up and down the Erie Canal,, letting him shake the hand of every surviving veteran of the Revolution,, giving him a sight of Niagara Falls and the other natural wonders.. At Fredonia,, t the good citizens had prepared something special. A frenchman had named their creek La Terre Puante " Stinking shore" not without cause; and now the village could boast that it was the first in America to be illuminated by natural gas.. In honor of the Marquis,, additional lights had been placed on the village green to shine on the only ~~boughten~~ manufactured carpet in the region,, generously and anxiously lent by the Episcopal minister's wife. Her anxiety was well founded,, for on that memorable night the carpet was forever ruined by the stomp of hob-nailed boots..
The expectation was that the General would arrive in the early evening.. Long before dark more than five hunderd citizens were gathered,, their numbers augmented

by other humdreds who had come from the outlying farms to t
tread on the store carpet.. Night fell, and the wonderful
lights were turned on, but no Lafayette appeared.. Nine,,
ten,, eleven o'clock sounded, but no Layfette appeared..
Then up the common raced yelling boys with the news that
the General's carrage was at the bridge.. The great reception
began,.

Now there was one lady in Fredonia who was expected to
shine with special glory when she curtseyed to Lafayette..
Mrs.. Risley was the owner of a handsome Paisley shawl,,
presumably imported from Scotland,, certainly the finest artic
of wearing appearal in the county.. Fredonia derives it name
from an Indian name meaning " free woman" and that night
Mrs. Risley proved herself free in the noble sense
of generous.. No sooner had she greeted the French
Hero on the platform than she slipped back into the
shadows and handed her shawl to a friend...then
to another and another and another, until the General's
eyes were more dazzled by the bright paisley tints than by
the illumination.. Afterwards he said:" Fredonia!!
It is a village of beautiful women,, beautifully dressed..
You would scarcely believe it of a frontier settlement,,
but I give you my word,, that in none of the large cities
of America,, have I seen so many handsome shawls!!

The sprague piano shares a place in story with the
Risley shawl..The first instrument of the region it
attracted much attention among the numerous citizens who had
no idea what a piano was.. One farmer left his oxen at the

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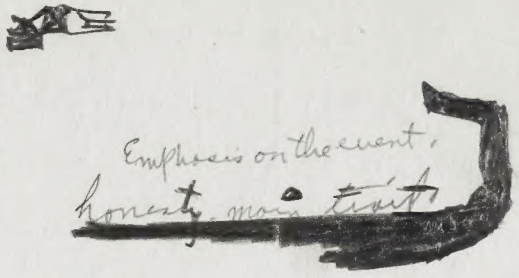

Aren't these two anecdotes history? If there is anything worth hearing in the corridor of time,, it is the courageous laughter of our ancestors.. If there is anything worth peserving it is the generousity of the frontier.. To me laughter and generousity seem contemporary....and not simply because I believe in the continuing present. Probably the most diverting songs and stories you know are those you heard and did not read..

There has,, it seems to me,. been a great revival of interest in the customs,, ways,, and sayings of our own people. The Rivers of America series, published by Farrar & Rinehart has presented pictures of life past and present along our great waterways. Allan Lomax and John Lomax have collected folk songs. Carl Sandburg has collected songs and has sung them to thousands.. Johnny Niles has risen to fame by singing the folksongs of Kentucky and the mountains.. Carl Carmer has written about New York State and Alabama...from the south have come other fine books about the people. Paul Green in North Carolina has written fine folk plays. In many parts of the United States historians are getting a fresh slant on history.....the history of the folk. Creative writers are turning more and more to the simplicity of the people.....in the pathways of history, green grass is growing.

In New York State, at Cornell University,, we have made a systematic search in the valleys and the hills for the lore of the folk. It has been a complex task. New York State is made up of a varied set of things,

follow with Lobsegars

Quest

in New York State where I have been working,

~~From the first years of our National life,~~ York Staters have wished, since the first days of their national life, to make romantic interpretations of their region and its folk,, and ~~our~~ their earliest writers were remarkably successful in this respect.. Washington Irving presented the Hudson in its noble scenery,, dreamy legends,, folk humor.. James Fenimore Cooper placed within ~~our~~ the charming and varied landscape no less than four heroic types: the intrepid frontiersman,, the sometimes noble redman,, the liberty-loving farmer and the valiant warrior.. More clearly than most critics have realized both Irvine and Cooper knew that their true romantic subject was the Empire State itself,, in all its virile beauty.. Later writers added enduring landscapes and portraits. Eben Holden is Bacheller's humble and loyal farm-hand; but he is also the magnamious North Country.. David Harum is Westcotts hoss-trader,, but he is also the friendly finger lakes.. In three Books Walter Edmonds has taken the Erie Canal for his hero;; in three others Carl Carmer has interpreted the "unstandardized Yorker" of all upstate--his folklore,, humor and pioneering strength

At Cornell we have always sought develop what T. S. Eliot calls the individual talent,, but we have been equally mindful of that other element mentioned in his famous essay "Tradition,, and the Individual Talent." And at Cornell, we have made a systematic search in the valleys and the hills for the tradition and the lore of the region and the folk.

It has been a complex task. New York is made up of a varied set of cultures that range from the great metripolitan districts; to the Hudson Valley with its very old Dutch ~~culture~~, settlement. From the Adirondacks which are a law unto themselves; to The soft, mysterious Finger Lakes; ~~and~~ from the North Country along the southern shores of Lake Ontario, to the western ~~country~~ new York with its newer culture, its oil and industry. But

We have folk-sayings in New York, and we have tall-tales!

The history of the tall tale, which is certainly one universal classification of folklore, is interesting. Benjenim Franklin, one of our earliest sages, was not above xxxxxxxxxxxx relating the occasional tall-tale, story as proved by his grave satarization of Englishmen's ignorance of America. In 1765 Dr. Franklin wrote:

The very tails of the American sheep are so laden with wool, that each has a little car or wagon on four little wheels, to support and keep it from trailing on the ground. Cod, like other fish when attacked by their enemies, fly into any waters where they can be safest. Whales, when they have a mind to eat Cod, persue them whereever they fly and..... the grand leap of the whale in that chase up the fall of Niagara is esteemed by all who have seen it, as one of the finest spectacles of nature!""

For generations the folk have enjoyed tales about local heroes. Sometimes, probably, these tales were created by the admiring friends and neighbors of some man possessing monstrous strength and wisdom. Often, perhaps, the individual created his own legend for the amusement of his neighbors, and the inflation of his own ego., or, like Franklin's, the tall story was used as satire, or ridicule. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx The tall story was found oftenest in the mountains, among lumbermen and guides, and hunters, and from the point of view of the tall tale

And of course, in New York State

~~If your taste is not for the individual hero of the tall-tale~~

we have the "Canawllers"... ~~in New York State~~. I mean, ~~of course,~~ the romance of the Erie Canal, which made New York the first city of America in size. The canal for many years bore the most vivid life of America on its placid surface. The boaters, however, would have it, that theirs was a "raging canawl" and they sang sturdy songs of its perils. Possibly the most famous is the one Carl Sandburg included in American Songbag... the E-R-I-E. In the dead of night, folk living along the great ditch as the canal was called in the early days, would hear the boaters booming this song to the accompainment of clanking harness chain.

We were forty miles from Albany,
Forget it I never shall.
What a terrible storm we had one night
on the E ri e canawl.

Then would come the ~~booming~~ chorus, in which everybody on the boat might join, ~~in~~:

Oh the E-ri-e was risin'
The gin was getting low.
And I scarcely think we'll get a drink,
Till we get to Buffalo.

Gin played a big part in the life of the Erie Canal.

It probably brought about the demise of at least one unfortunate character names Big Foot Sal.

They canal men sing this song about her:

Drop a tear for Big Foot Sal
The best damn cook on the Erie Canal
She aimed for heaven, but she went to hell--
Fifteen yearson the Erie Canal.
The missioner said she died in sin,,
Hennery said it was too much gin;
There weren't no bar where she hadn't been,
From Albany to Buffalo..

But whatever his feelings about the cook the canawler was likely to be fond of horses or mules. This might be shown by the " Canal man's farewell"

Lay me on the hoss bridge
With my feet toward the bow.
Let it be a laker
or a Tonawanda scow..
See that my mules are well cared for
With salve upon their breasts..
Give me a chunk of Black Rock pork
And lay me down to rest..

~~xxxxx~~

Possibly more than any other thing, the Erie Canal was responsible for the settlemen of the west. It is interesting, that when Walter Edmond's movie " The Farmer Takes a Wife" was shown, the peak of interest was not in New York,, but in the western states where the people remember that it was the canal that set their ~~xxxxxxx~~ destiny.. In 1910 the state of Ohio ranked thirteenth in population.. In 1840,, fifteen years after the opening of the canal,, Ohio was third.. In 1810 there were four settlements in Michigan,, with a population of less than five thousand.. In 1840 the population was 212, 000,, largely settler from New York and New England..
It is small wonder that the state song of Michigan said:
Then there's the State of New York, where so some are very rich,,
Themselves and a few others have dug a might y ditch..
To render it more easy for us to find the~~xxx~~ way,,
And sail upon the waters to Michigan~~a~~
Yea,. yea,. yea,. to Michigania.

I've given you a little taste of York State lore, but you're probably thinking:

It's all very well to collect stories and local history; but how does the collection of these things aid in the life of the communities of a region.? One of our first ambitions in New York, as it is here, was to make the communities as conscious as possible of the value of their traditions,, and bring communities together through the common knowledge of the humor and history of the countryside.

To accomplish this the New York State Drama Project was instituted as an outgrowth of the folklore and local history project.. Already the immagination of the folk was awakened.. There was a public interest..The State Historical Society was peppering the hills and the valleys with historical markers. Sometimes the zeal of the historically minded was almost too great.. The DAR went out one day and,, without permission,, planted an immense concrete marker in the middle of a farmer's best cornfield.. This made that farmer very conscious of the history of his farm,, but the results were not of the best,, and thematter ended in the courts. Carl Carmer was writing about New York State..Harold Thompson had completed his splendid York State book of the folkways called " Body Boots and Britches,, upon which I have leaned heavily for some of my York State tales. The time seemed ripe to make the approach to the communities.

I set out to write some New York State plays,, using these fine stories,, and our idea was to make these plays available to any individual or community group in

the American NorthEast,, royalty free. We were to have plays about the important stories of every major community. This was a big job. It's one thing to collect stories. It's quite another to get down to the strenuous labor of playwriting,, and it'S still another to find other writers willing to help. However,. by strenuous digging, I located over two hundred writers in New York State who were willing to assist.....to write plays themselves,. and to suggest stories,, and help get their communities interested in the project.. Soon the plays began to come in,, and soon I was flooded with a correspondence that threatened to sink me. At the same time I was trying to get Some plays written myself. I selected as the first theme the trials and tribulations of the frontier ministers in New York State. And for a story I found in an old newspaper an account of the experience of the Rev.. Garrit Mandeville a Prespyterian preacher who journeyed twenty miles through a blizzard to perform a Marryin' at a backwoods cabin..... with a bride who wasn't too eager to get married,. and a bridegroom who never came in from the woods until after sundown. ~~Naturally~~ ~~I couldn't show this minister journeying across~~

When the minister arrived to join the pair he found the bride hiding behind a quilt stretched across a corner to make a dressing room,, and refusing to come out and be married; while the bridegroom stormed about the room yelling vengence and threatening to slay the whole tribe into which he was about to marry..

Naturally I couldn't show this minister journeying across

the forest, nor did I wish to show the bridegroom picking woodticks off himself; which was one of the reasons I suspect, that the bride was so reluctant. But I made up a play in which the quilt figured heavily, and I brought the ministers wife into the play story was set in the minister's house,, with the whole bunch coming to him to get married.. I kept the quilt, and gave the minister a wife who tactfully solved the whole affair by cutting a slit in the quilt so the young people might join hands,, and got them happily married off.. I mention this play because it was immediately sucessful,, and since it was written,, four years ago has been produced several thousand times in the Northeast alone.. Could I have collected even a couple of dollars royalty on this one play I might be able to retire; to that little farm that everybody has at the back of his mind..... but in a project of this kind sacrifices are neceasary.. We felt that the stories belonged to the people,, and that,, whether rich or poor,. the people should have first chance at them..

dissent here from Duke Gunn?

The first year of the New York State Drama project we wrote and collected over one hundred and fifty fairly good York State plays, both short and full length. We circulated them through the American Agricultorali Magazine,, a publication in the Northeast with a half million circulation. Busi ness boomed.....and the editorial staff of the magazine was forced to hire a couple of new people.....but they stuck with us.. Meanwhile the drama in New York was getting a fine boost. Other States began to look to us for advice and assistance. Other creative projects were started.

I wanted to try out our idea of bringing communities together through the work of our project.. I was living at the time in the small town of Newfield,. New York,, near Ithaca,, and for many years this town and surrounding country had been riven by feuds and quarrels. There were three methodists churches,, none of which could agree. There was a large Checkoslavian or Bohemian ~~xxxx~~ population up in the hills,, and a large Finnish population.. And of course there was the old American stock which went back to the Revoultionary War.. This seemed a fertile territory to try out our ideas. The Finnish folk fought among themselves over politics. Many ~~wasxxx~~the high-power rifle I saw standing ready beside the kitchen door,. with a box of ammunition waiting to repel,. if need be,. a conflicting neighbor.. The Checks were suspicious of the Finns.. The Old American residents were suspicious of both,, and suspicious of each other. The methodists were again everybody....including themselves. So I proposed to the village leaders that we set aside a friendship day when everybody could come to town,, and see just what was what about their neighbors.. The Finns were to bringtheir wood carving and handicraft,, at which they are unsurpassed.. The Checks were to bring their folk dances. The old Americans were to bring their historical relics,. and their traditions.....I couldn't think,, for a while what the Methodists could bring....until I hit on the idea of finding out just what it was that started their quarrel,, and dramatized it,, and got members of each church to act in it..

Everything seemed to go along fine.. Then a few quarrels broke out among the Finns.. Each side was trying to outdo the other, and ~~xx~~

they quibbled over anything.
~~have the best exhibit~~. I remember one morning when I (their national poem)
was only half awake several Finns of both factions descended
on me to settle their quarrel. One accused the Kalevala
I adopted the only safe
method I could think of,, and reminded them that Longfellow
had stolen the Kalevala (their national poem) when he
wrote Hiawatha..... and they immediately got sore at
Longfellow,, and ended up by shaking hands.....
Several of the old Americans were heard to mutter that
they had never thought of being friends with such and such and
so and so until that fellow Gard came to town.....but these
decanting factions were overwhelmed and the day was a real
success. The dances were wonderful.. The Checks were in
costume,. the Finns had outdone themselves in their handicraft..
The old Americans had a chance to relate their history..
Fond memories and nostalgia were everwhere. The historical
one-act plays were good.. The speeches were not too long..
The whole affair ended up with a great square dance in the
evening with the Finnish young folk dancing with the
Checks....the Old Americans dancing in the same pattern
with neighbors they hadn't spoken to for half a generation.
It was worth doing.. And it demonstrated that people only
need to know each other to understand each other.

I came to Alberta a year ago last summer to lecture to
the Banff School.. Unable to wear a uniform I fel t that
the best thing I could do was to help keep alive in this
difficult time, the creative aspects of the life of the
people.....to help preserve the traditions of the past
and to keep people aware of the traditions they ~~were~~ are
making in the present.. I was interested in the Banff

School,, and perhaps even more, I was interested in the people I met briefly in Alberta.. I was interested in a region where a farm woman, whose men-folk were in the war, could somehow find a week to come to the school and get a bit of knowledge which would enable her to return to her community and help to enrich its life.. I was interested in a region where a family had the courage to watch hail beat down their crops in the morning, and make ice cream out of the hailstones in the afternoon.. I was interested in the struggle with the elements of nature so obviously being waged in the Province.. I was interested in the lonliness of the farms, the great xxxxxx spaces and vistas of the prairies..... I was interested in the optimism of the people who could support a School of Art in wartime..... I was told about the Englishmen, and the almost old-world culture that existed on some of the ranches.....of Englishmen who would often write a latin motto on the back of a restaurant check, and who might start quoting Virgil or Miltom most anytime.....the Englismnen who could live on a big scale easier in Alberta than in the old country.. I was interested in the good eduactional system of the Province, the good health system aided by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Foundation. I was interested in the newness of the Province, which made it possible for a pioneer to bring a paino to his homestead.. I was interested in the incredible misery the loneliness of the prairies must have meant to many others.. I was told of the settlers from the American Middlewest; of the Mormons, and the religious groups. there were 17 different religions.
I heard tales of the terrific cold which drove cattle into the streets of Calgary in 1908.. I was interested in the tales of

the pioneering priests and the explorers and the trappers; the oil boom,, and the land booms and the advertisements which appeared in the Ontario papers:

Buy farms in Alberta: Leave home after Easter,, sow grain, take in the golden harvest and come home with pockets full of money in time for thanksgiving dinner.....

or:

Do you realize what opportunities await you in the West? Surely you do not.. If you did know,, you would not continue year after year to work a living and nothing more on the light soil of a hillside farm. All you require is a small amount of carital. pluck and energy.. If you have the pluck and energy,, you can get the capital.."

I was interested in knowing whether the burst of enthusiasm which carried settlers to Alberta " golden West" had lasted.

So when the chance was made by Donald Cameron and the Rockefeller foundation to spend a year in Alberta, exploring its people and their tales and history,, I eagerly said "yes". And as we saw it the work would be twofold: First, the collection of a body of Alberta folklore.... acquainting Alberta folk with it through the papers, through writers of books and plays, in an effort to make the Alberta people realize the wonderful heritage they possess, and to help them to understand each other. The second part,, and perhaps a more scholarly one, was an attempt to find out where collected bodies of local history of the Province were, and through this survey to lay a foundation for the succeeding work of a Provincial archivist.....we hope,.

a man of great human understanding and imagination.....capable of making the history of Alberta live.

Now some persons have said to me since I've been here..... is there any folklore in Alberta? If so, we haven't heard of it.....

Terms are often confusing, and I suspect that these doubters did not rightly understand that by folklore we meant the whole life of the Alberta folk.....past and present. That we meant their comments on the weather.....on the land. That we meant the tales of the Indians, and the waterways, the Alberta place names; the stories of the industries....mining, oil, wheat....the tall tales; murderers; religions; railways..... animal stories; and characters of the Province.....

These doubters possibly didn't understand that we meant the customs and ways of life of the National groups in the Province..... the story of each of which would probably make a book. The ones who shook their heads over Alberta couldn't have remembered the recent movement to the North and west.....and the fine body of material which will inevitably emerge from that.....

~~in Alberta? Listen to a few tall tales made by the settlers to build up flagging spirits...to preserve the optimism of the land:~~

Here are a few that have come to me from the South about the dry weather. "It's so dry," writes one man, "that I haven't had a bath since the mid-wife washed me. That was thirty years ago."

No folklore in A-berta? I'm here to tell you that Alberta is a remarkable Province, in more ways than one.. There is a distinct fantasy about the region.. Where else in Canada would you find a man living in a tree, as one does,. or did,. at Rocky Mountain House.. Where else in Canada are there so many youthful idealists,, waiting for a chance to build the perfect State.. You might,. in British Columbia or Ontario find tales of the Ogopogo.....the monster that lives in the water.....but surely no Ogopogo is as big or as terrible as the one that lives in the North Sackatchewam. Do you remember Hatfield the rainmaker? There's a fantastic tale..... Have you never heard of the exploits of "Twelve-foot Davis?" Have you never respected the Alberta immagination as reflected in the tall-tales? The tall tales of Alberta are as good as those anywhere. In fact,. maybe better. Listen to a few tall-tales ,. made up by the folk,. to buck up flagging spirits,. and tp preserve the optimism of the land..

When she was finally hauled before the authorities and fined two-hundred dollars for her sins,. a railroader doffed his hat and yelled:
" Boys,. shell out fer the widder!."
The two-hundred was raised in five minutes.

I don't need to do more than mention the Alberta Place names. I'm sure everybody realizes that they're a body of folklore in themselves. There are good stories about every town in the Province. I like the Edmonton story about the"Edmonton Rebellion" when all the citizens turned out with shotguns to keep the land office from being moved to the south side of the river.. If the land office had gone,. the center of Edmonton would be on the South side today.

Whxtxlxxxxxtxxlxxxxx

Many of the folk who made the tales I have told,. or their fathers or grandfathers,. came to Alberta when there was the sound ofhammering in the air.....the spirit of an Empire building.....they came when Alberta was to represent the highest aspiration of the human soul. For many ,. perhaps,. as in other regions,. aspiration has turned to disappointment; yet,. it seems to me, Alberta folk have been able to keep their optimism in the face of hardships.. Their optimism goes on.. This is shown xx clearly in their humor.. their fortitude and humor have created They can joke.. And in their perservance they axxxxxxxxxxx the real Alberta.. The Alberta we hope this year to help preserve..

From every side the material of the life of Alberta, past and present, is coming in. We have heard from over one-hundred Alberta communities. The mail gets heavier. " Mr. Gard, " writes one pioneer, " you are the answer to an old woman's prayer." (A new role for me) and she relates something of the early days in her region. " I see by the Press", writes a farmer up north, " that you want information about Alberta." I know something about Alberta and my region. I'm lonely as hell. Come up and talk about anything."

So the tales are coming in. From the south; from Edmonton; from the north. Tales are coming in about the Ukranians, the Hutterites, the Mennonites and the Methidsists. From Red Deer, Okoatoks, Ponoka and Stettler. From Athabaska, Marwayne, Excel and Peace River. From Dawson Creek, Fort Smith, McMurry and Waterways, come people eager to tell their story and the story of their region. From the north com vague whispers about Ed Cody, the greatest tall-tale spinner the north ever saw. From the south I hear about Paddy Nolan, the greatest wit Calgary ever produced. From every side come the pioneers or their descendants. Already I have glimpsed the spirit of Alberta.

~~We are living in a heritage from the past. The backbone of our lives is this wealth of remberances handed down to us. In these hurried days let us take a little time to take stock of ourselves. To find out~~ why our way of life is better for us than